



Feedback on **Los Altos'** application to be designated a Bicycle Friendly Community – Spring 2011

The League of American Bicyclists has designated Los Altos as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **bronze** level. Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts, potential and commitment to make Los Altos a great place for bicyclists which can be seen in the growing number of cyclists.

Some of the highlights of the application are increased bike signage, plans to incorporate bicycle education into public schools, Boltage tracking programs at schools, updates to the Bicycle Master Plan, work with neighboring cities, support and promotion of students riding to school, and work to partner with local businesses.

The BFC review team expects great things in the future given the good local team and the coming improvements to the network and programs. Reviewers provided the following suggestions to further promote bicycling.

The four most significant measures the city should take to improve cycling in the community are:

- Adopt a Complete Streets policy and offer implementation guidance. Every street should accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists and transit users of all abilities and ages.
<http://www.completestreets.org/>
- Offer a bicycling skills class on a *regular* basis. Ideally the instruction would incorporate a classroom portion as well as on-road training. Contact your local advocacy group to see if there are classes in your area. Or invite a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) to your campus to conduct the class. For examples of educational materials visit:
<http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/> To find a local LCI go to:
http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/course_schedule.php
- Expand encouragement efforts during Bike Month. Have the Mayor and/or the City Council proclaim May as Bike Month and have promotional events such as a community ride or commuter challenge.
- Increase the number of police officers patrolling on bike. This increased interaction between enforcement and the bicycling community should also include targeting bicycle infractions and positive enforcement ticketing. Provide the proper training such as through the International Police Mountain Biking Association:
<http://www.ipmba.org/instructors.htm>

Reviewers provided the following suggestions to further promote bicycling:



Engineering

- Expanding the bicycle and pedestrian manager's time focused on these projects would help in scaling up your BFC efforts. Current work of the BPAC and TDM staff could be complemented by a full-time staff person devoted to acquiring bike/ ped grants and making the community bicycle-friendly. See this report on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff.
http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why_bike_ped_staff_april_2010.pdf
- Set up training for city staff and area consultants on bicycle facility design and planning. Consider a membership to the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals www.apbp.org for city Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff. Training opportunities and the listserv provided by this organization are excellent resources
- Provide opportunities for [ongoing training](#) on accommodating bicyclists for engineering, planning staff, and law enforcement. Consider hosting a [Smart Cycling](#) course for city staff to better understand cyclists' needs, behavior, and their right to use city streets as well as multi-use paths for transportation.
- Increase the amount of way-finding signage around the community. Here are some best practices from the Washington, DC area council of governments:
<http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/t1dZW1k20070516090831.pdf>
- Increase the number of arterial streets that have wide shoulders or [bike lanes](#). Continue to expand the bicycle network and increase network connectivity through the use of bike lanes, shared lane arrows and signed routes. On-street improvements coupled with the expansion of the off-street system will continue to increase use and improve safety. These improvements will also increase the effectiveness of encouragement efforts by providing a broader range of facility choices for users of various abilities and comfort levels.

Education

- Ensure that bicycle-safety education is a routine part of public education. Implement a [Safe Routes to School program](#) that emphasizes bicycling and encourage all schools to get involved. In Arlington, Virginia every school in the County was visited by a team with representatives from Department of Public Works, the Police and Schools to assess conditions for walking and biking to each school. A list of problems and solutions was developed measures were identified to address problems. Short-term projects such as painting crosswalks were done right away while larger construction projects are on-going. Funding is available in the federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, among several other sources at both the federal and state levels. See www.saferoutesinfo.org for more information.



- Continue to expand public education campaigns to promote the share the road message and the rights and responsibilities of all users. There are some new tools for you to use. See a new motorist education video at <http://bikelib.org/video/index.htm> It is vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Also, see the excellent Look Campaign from New York City: http://www.nyc.gov/html/look/html/about/about_us_text.shtml and use the valuable information from the League's Ride Better Tips in your outreach education and encouragement efforts. See the Ride Better Tips pages at <http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/better/index.php>
- Improve the reach of the community's bicycle safety campaigns. Use valuable information from the League's Ride Better Tips in your outreach education and encouragement efforts. See the Ride Better Tips pages at <http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/better/index.php>, PSA's <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/psas.php> and the downloadable Bicycle Safety Tips for Adults video at <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/shortversion.wmv>

Encouragement

- Consider launching a public bike sharing system that is open to the public. A bike share system is a convenient, cost effective, and healthy way of encouraging commuters to make short trips by bike. See what is being done across the country at <http://streetswiki.wikispaces.com/Public+Bike-Sharing+Programs>
- Consider offering a 'Ciclovía' or 'Summer Streets' type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events. <http://cicloviarecreativa.uniandes.edu.co/english/index.html>
- Reach children with bicycling education outside of school in recreation programs, bicycle repair co-ops, Trips for Kids events, and through youth bike clubs. Here is an example from Portland, OR - <http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org/index.php/programs-for-youth>
- Encourage local businesses to promote cycling to the workplace. During Bike to Work Week set up a commuter challenge or bike to work pit stop. For more information on encouragement ideas please visit <http://www.bicyclefriendlycommunity.org/tech.htm> Olympia, Washington holds a Bike Commuter Contest during Bike Month and encourages people to participate in the month-long Contest to see who can ride the most number of days or miles in the month of May. The growth in participation has been stunning. Olympia also offers city employees a \$2 per day incentive for commuting by bike (as well as for walking, riding the bus or carpooling). Each year, approximately 50 to 60 of the City's 600 employees participate in the Bicycle Commuter Contest.



Enforcement

- Make stronger connections between bicycling community and law enforcement. Ensure that police officers are educated on the "Share the Road" message and have general knowledge regarding traffic law as it applies to bicyclists. The city should implement regular training for officers on this like an *Enforcement for Bicycle Safety* seminar. This is a great continuing education opportunity for law enforcement.

http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/bikesafe/case_studies/casestudy.cfm?CS_NUM=801

Evaluation & Planning

- Fully implement the [comprehensive bike plan](#) and continue to close gaps in the cycling network. Also, expand the encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage. Set an ambitious, attainable target to increase the percentage of trips made by bike in the city.
- Conduct research on bicycle usage throughout Los Altos beyond the U.S. Census' Journey to Work report to more efficiently distribute resources according to demand. Consider implementing a trip reduction program/ordinance. See good examples at <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/> and <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=43801>
- Work with the [mountain biking community](#) to develop a plan for off-road access and increase opportunities for [single-track](#) riding within the city
- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community http://www.altaplanning.com/App_Content/files/fp_docs/2008%20Portland%20Bicycle-Related%20Economy%20Report.pdf

For more ideas and best practices please visit the [Bicycle Friendly Community Resource Page](#)